difficult. Further, since a number of these restrictive measures have been relaxed by the US since their imposition in May 1998, their impact is yet to be finally evaluated.

(b) and (c) In July 1998, the US congress passed an amendment, called the Agriculture Export Relief Act of 1998 which exempted financial assistance for purchase of food, medicines and other agricultural commodities from the purview of the Glenn Amendment.

In November, 1998, under the Brownback Amendment passed by the US Congress, US Administration announced partial relaxation of the measures until October 21, 1999 relating to the programmes of three US institutions namely the EXIM Bank, Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) and the Trade Development Authority (TDA). The US Administration also restored lending by US Banks and resumed their International Military Education and Training Programme (IMET)

The general approach of the Government in countering the effect of these restrictive economic measures has been to try to get a better understanding of our position by the US. The US Administration stated that it had taken the above steps in recognition of the progress made in their dialogue with India.

No first use pact with Pakistan

987. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in a recent press briefing Prime Minister had declared that the offer of a "no first use" pact on nuclear weapons would be repeated to Pakistan Government during the visit of Pakistan on February 20, 1999 in the inaugural direct Bus Service from Delhi to Lahore;

(b) if so, the reaction of the Pakistani Prime Minister;

(c) whether such an offer was made several times in the past with negative response; and

(d) if so, what was the need to repeat it?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) to (d) India's commitment to 'no-first-use' of nuclear weapons, announced subsequent to the May 1998 nuclear tests, is integral to our nuclear doctrine. We have also indicated our readiness to negotiate binding agreements on no-first-use, bilaterally or multilaterally, as government believes that support for such no-first-use agreements would not only reduce the risk of nuclear conflict, but also further the process of delegitimisation of nuclear weapons, an essential step for global nuclear disarmament. Earlier, India had offered to negotiate an agreement with Pakistan on no-first-use or nuclear capability. Various proposals on the nuclear question, made by both India and Pakistan, were discussed during PM's recent visit to Lahore. Pakistan has reservations to a no-first-use concept. However, both countries have agreed to take immediate steps for reducing the risk of accidental or unauthorised use of nuclear weapons, and to discuss concepts and doctrines with a view to elaborating measures for confidence building in the nuclear and conventional fields, aimed at prevention of conflict.

Indian Prisoners in Pakistani Jails

988. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAMA:
PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA:
SHRI RAGHAVJI:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of Indian civilian prisoners in Pakistani jails and the Pakistani civilian prisoners in Indian jails as on 31st December, 1998;

(b) whether repatriation talks have been held with Pakistan Government in this regard;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and whether the matter will be taken up with Pakistani Government; and

(d) if so, by when?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) As per available information, 788 Indian civilian prisoners are believed to be under detention in Pakistani jails and 55 Pakistani civilians are in custody in India.

(b) to (d) The issue of early release and repatriation of civilian prisoners has, repeatedly and at all levels, been taken up with the Government of Pakistan. The issue was last raised in the Prime Minister's talks with the Pakistan Prime Minister at Lahore on February 21-22, 1999. The two Prime Ministers decided to appoint a two-member committee at Ministerial level to examine issues relating to civilian detainees and missing POWs. Official level discussions are to be held shortly to work out mechanisms for action in accordance with this principle.

Burmese protest against Minister's statement

989. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Burmese Government have lodged a protest against the Union Minister of Defence for his alleged support to the Burmese dissidents;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) what is the reaction of Government with regard thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Journalist Accompanying PM during Foreign Visits

990. SHRI ONKAR SINGH LAKHAWAT: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of journalists who accompanied the Prime Minister of India during each of his foreign visits in last three years, together with the year-wise details thereof;

(b) the details regarding the criteria adopted for selection of the journalists accompanyihg the Prime Minister; and

(c) whether the Government proposed to make the process transparent regarding selection of the journalists accompanying the Prime Minister and the President of India; if so, by when and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) The information is attached as statement (*See* below).

(b) and (c) The selection is done to include newspapers, journals, columnists, agencies and TV networks and to give the composition an all-India spread. National dailies which have a wide circulation, regional language dailies, important journals and TV networks are selected on a rotational basis to give maximum possible coverage to the visit from the foreign policy angle and from the point of view of India's policies and concerns. The editors of the concerned newspapers, journals, agencies or networks are consulted in the matter.

Statement

Year	Countries which PM visited	Total number of journalists who accompanied PM
1996	Zimbabwe and Italy	68
1997	Switzerland,	224